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ABSTRACT

An evaluation was made of the PhoneFriend program at State College, Pennsylvania--an after-school phone-in service designed as a "friend-in-need" outreach service for children 5 through 13 years of age. The evaluation specifically investigated the extent to which PhoneFriend provided information and support to children at home alone after school and the extent to which the service provided a viable after-school service for parents. An additional focus of the evaluation was to assess the extent of the community's awareness of the program. Adult subjects, listed in the Pennsylvania State University faculty and staff telephone directory, were contacted by campus mail. When possible their children were surveyed by telephone. A total of 80 parents responded to the survey questionnaire and 37 of their children were interviewed. Data suggested that PhoneFriend has been successful in providing a valuable and greatly appreciated service to parents and children in the university community. The overwhelming majority of parents and children surveyed were familiar with PhoneFriend and, in general, were pleased with the service. It is concluded that PhoneFriend has recognized and acted upon an important community need in an effective, efficient manner that has completely satisfied its target audience. Six tables provide detailed results; parent and child survey intruments are appended. (RH)

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PHONEFRIEND EVALUATION REPORT

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December 15, 1986

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Title of Program: PhoneFriend

Program Director: Louise Guerney, Ph.D.
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Purpose of the Program: PhoneFriend is an after-school phone-in service designed not to be a crisis line nor as a counseling referral service, but rather as a "friend-in-need," out-reach service. Its purpose is to help children, ages 5 through 13, and families and to gather information which may lead to further community action. There are four broad program goals:

1. To create a helping network that will provide information and support to children at home without adult supervision after school hours;
2. To help these children help themselves;
3. To augment the existing inadequate data base for this population;
4. To increase the awareness of the community about the identified needs of these children.

Purpose of the Evaluation: This evaluation was designed to assess the impact of PhoneFriend on parents and children in the university community. More specifically, we explored the extent to which PhoneFriend provides information and support to children at home alone after school and the extent to which PhoneFriend provides a viable after-school service for parents. Thus, the major focus of this evaluation was to address the first broad program goal.

In addition, a second focus of the evaluation was to assess the awareness of parents and children in the university community of this service. This information will be supplemented by a forthcoming needs assessment conducted by the State College Area School District regarding after-school care. The results from the School District survey will be available in late January or early February.

Thirdly, this evaluation, in and of itself, provides support for the third program goal. Finally, we indirectly assessed the second program goal. However, the second program goal was not a focus of this evaluation, due to circumstances beyond our control, i.e., lack of permission by the PhoneFriend Executive Board to observe the PhoneFriend volunteers in action.

Method: Our subjects were recruited through campus mail from the Pennsylvania State University faculty and staff telephone directory. We randomly selected 700 university employees listed in the directory and sent to each an introductory letter explaining the intent of our study, our questionnaire, and an inter-office envelope in which to return the completed survey (see Appendix A). Our target population was parents and their grade school children, ages 5 through 13. We contacted the Pennsylvania State University, Department of Information, to ascertain information regarding the family composition of university employees; this information was unavailable. In light of this, a great many subjects selected for participation were

no doubt ineligible. These individuals were instructed to disregard our request and discard our questionnaire.

In addition to asking parents to respond to our questions regarding PhoneFriend, we were also interested in hearing what their children thought of the service. Parents who consented to our calling their elementary school-aged children and asking them a series of questions about PhoneFriend (see Appendix B for Child Telephone Interview script) provided us with their children's first names, home telephone numbers and a convenient time for us to call on the last page of the questionnaire.

Family impact. Parents (P) and children (C) were asked a series of questions designed to assess the following:

1. Parents' work situation. (P)
2. After-school arrangements for children. (P)
3. Family awareness of PhoneFriend. (P,C)
4. Patterns of phone-line usage. (P,C)
5. Satisfaction with the service. (P,C)

Community impact. In an effort to address community impact, an attempt was made to secure information regarding the number of calls made by school-aged children to the State College Police Department before and after PhoneFriend was initiated. However, these summary statistics were not available.

Subject Characteristics:

Parent Characteristics and Family Structure. Eighty parents responded to our questionnaire. Of these,

thirty-nine were fathers and 33 were mothers of school-aged children. The remaining eight respondents failed to indicate their gender. The majority of parents (64% or 51 parents) had only one child between the ages of five and 13 living in their home. An additional 30% (n=24) were parents of two school-aged children and the remaining 6% had three youngsters living in their home. With respect to older children, 76% of parents (n=61) reported at least one older child living in their home as well.

In terms of the parents' work situations, over half of our sample (62% or 50 parents) were from two-parent households where both parents worked outside the home full or part-time. An additional 25% (n=20 parents) were from two-parent, single-earner families and the remaining 13% (n=10 parents) were single, working parents.

With respect to the elementary-school children's after school situation, 81% (n=65 parents) reoprt that their children went home directly after school. Seventy-seven percent (n=51) of those children at home had someone at home with them. Specifically, for the most part, parents or older siblings were at home with the children. Interestingly, 15 respondents (23%) indicated that their child was alone in the house after school. In their responses to subsequent questions, it became clear that some children, whose parents report were with an adult after school, at times wait anywhere from one to four hours before an adult arrives.

These data suggest that many children return to an empty house directly after school. This information, taken together with data from the State College Area School District Survey (available from the School District at the end of January or beginning of February) demonstrates the need to develop community awareness of the after-school of Latchkey children in our area.

Child Characteristics. We interviewed 37 children by telephone, ranging in age from 5 years old to 13 years old (see Table 1 for age breakdown). Nineteen boys and 18 girls were interviewed (see Table 2 for sex by age breakdown). Preliminary analyses indicated that there were no statistical differences between groups in terms of gender on any of the items. There were age effects on three of the items: 1)have you heard of PhoneFriend; 2)have you ever called PhoneFriend; and 3)does having PhoneFriend to call make you feel better, worse, or no differently. These results will be discussed shortly.

Results of the Parents' Survey

Of the 80 parents responding to our survey, 86% (69 parents) were familiar with the after school phoneline. These parents' responses will be the focus of our report. It is important to note that tests of group differences revealed no differences between mothers and fathers or single and dual earner families. Thus, results for all parents will be presented together. Table 6 contains item frequencies for parents' responses.

Awareness of PhoneFriend. We asked parents who had heard of PhoneFriend to indicate the means through which they first became aware of the phoneline's availability. As Table 6 shows, the most frequently reported source of information about PhoneFriend was school personnel (31% or 21 parents). An additional 32% (22 parents) reported having heard about the service from more than one source. Most often, school personnel were included when parents reported two or more sources of information. These data suggest that PhoneFriend's use of the school as an arena for information dissemination has been especially effective.

Just over half of the parents (54%), indicated that the PhoneFriend sticker was by their telephone. Further, 69% (47 parents) reported talking with their children about the phoneline.

Use of PhoneFriend. With respect to phone calls made to PhoneFriend, 9% (6 parents) reported that their school age children had called. It is important to note that while this figure (six children) does not suggest frequent use of the

service, as will be discussed later, it may be that the availability of the phoneline itself may preclude the need to call.

When we asked about their children's reasons for calling, four parents suggested that their children were curious about the service, they wanted to "check it out" (see Table 6). As one mother wrote, "She did it only once out of curiosity (her father was home at the time)." Another parent's response suggested that her child may have been bored while at home alone after school. She wrote, "It was just something to do. She was bored." One final reason for calling was offered. This reason involved the child being nervous or uneasy. The child's father noted, "She heard a noise in the house and got upset, kind of jittery."

As Table 6 reveals, only two of the six parents reporting their children had called PhoneFriend responded to our question regarding how much calling PhoneFriend helped their children. Each reported that calling seemed to help with one parent indicating calling PhoneFriend helped "a lot" and the other indicating calling helped "a little." The remaining parents' responses suggested that the question was not appropriate for their children's situations. For example, parents whose children called out of curiosity did not answer this item.

Next, we asked parents whose children had not called how they would feel about their children using the service (see Table 6). Most parents were either neutral (34% or 21 parents) or positive (58% or 35 parents) regarding their children's use of the phoneline. With respect to negative feelings about children's use of PhoneFriend, five parents (8%) indicated that they

would not be pleased if their children called. These parents' responses suggested that they would strongly encourage their children to contact them rather than PhoneFriend personnel.

Of the six parents whose children had called, two were neutral and four were very positive. One mother noted, "The people who talked to my son have been very kind."

Another issue we were interested in exploring was the existence of any family rules or restrictions regarding the use of PhoneFriend (see Table 6). Interestingly, 34% (23 parents) reported having special conditions under which they might restrict their children's use of the phoneline. Among these conditions were: 1) abuse of the service with the children calling for no real reason, and 2) if the children could have reached their parents. One father wrote, "It is not to be used as a game or a joke." Another noted, "He can call only during emergencies - He can call my office instead."

Seventy five percent (51 parents) reported having special conditions under which they might encourage their children to use PhoneFriend. Among these conditions were: 1) the children are alone and afraid, 2) a dangerous situation arises, and 3) the children need something and cannot reach their parents. Each response occurred with about equal frequency (as Table 6 demonstrates). Interestingly, existing PhoneFriend literature does not suggest that parents monitor their children's use of the service in any way. However, part of the philosophy behind PhoneFriend includes working within preestablished family guidelines. Information regarding parents' and children's

understanding of when children should and should not call PhoneFriend can be helpful to PhoneFriend personnel.

When asked why kids <u>in general</u> might call PhoneFriend, a number of responses were offered (see Table 6). The most frequently cited reason for calling PhoneFriend (42 parents) was "being bored or lonely". "To have a friendly person to talk with" was a popular response (38 parents), as was "when the children are afraid" (37 parents). A few parents suggested that children might call simply to check out the service and ask questions or for their amusement.

<u>Peace of Mind.</u> In an effort to assess PhoneFriend's impact on family functioning, we asked parents to report if the availability of PhoneFriend had changed how they felt about where their children went after school (see Table 6). Almost all parents (99% or 67 parents) reported that PhoneFriend had not had an impact on their feelings or their decisions regarding after school arrangements for their children. Similarly, 87% (55 parents) reported that PhoneFriend's availability had not had an effect on how their children feel about their after school situations. We also asked children to tell us if having PhoneFriend to call made them feel differently about being home without any grownups. These data will be presented later. The reader's attention is directed to the comparison between parents' and children's reports.

<u>Satisfaction With PhoneFriend.</u> When asked about what, if anything, parents found dissatisfactory about PhoneFriend, only two respondents offered information (see Table 6). One mother

wrote, "It's only for school days. But schools have a lot of in-service days where the child is home but the parent is working." Actually, PhoneFriend is available on in-service days. Thus, PhoneFriend might wish to consider ways of making it clear that the service does operate on in-service days.

Another father's comments suggested that he was not "dissatisfied" but rather "disturbed" by the service's philosophy. He explained, "I feel strongly that children should not be left alone at home, and I feel that a telephone service such as PhoneFriend offers only false security that is a poor substitute for adult supervision."

Thirty parents offered information regarding things about PhoneFriend that they were especially pleased with (see Table 6). The most frequently cited issue involved the availability of the service to their children. These parents wrote things like, "Someone is there for children who need to talk to someone," and "In an emergency, when parents cannot be reached, a child has a friend he can call." Still others noted, "Simply its availability. Although neither of my kids has yet used it to my knowledge - I'm glad they have it as a resource," and "That it exists at all. Actually, just knowing there's someone to call can make the call itself unnecessary."

Some parents discussed their appreciation for the ideas and people behind PhoneFriend. One mother wrote, "At least someone cares about these kids and understands how tough it is and they're trying to do something to help the situation. Thanks!" Another wrote, "Yeah! Someone feels children are important

enough to have this service available to them if they need it."

Consent to Call Children. Thirty three of the 80 parents (41%) consented to our calling their children and asking a series of questions regarding their knowledge and use of the PhoneFriend phoneline. In the following section we discuss these children's responses in detail.

Results of the Children's Survey

The frequencies and percentages for each item in the telephone survey are presented in Table 3 Item Frequencies, Table 4 Frequencies By Age, and Table 5 Frequencies By Sex, at the end of this report. The latter two tables have been provided for the reader's interest; it is important to remember that there were no gender differences and, for the most part, no age differences.

Awareness of PhoneFriend. Most of the children we interviewed were aware of PhoneFriend. Specifically, 31 (83.8%) of the 37 children we interviewed were aware that PhoneFriend existed. We asked those 31 children who reported that they were aware of PhoneFriend to give us a brief verbal description of what PhoneFriend was. All 31 children correctly gave a description that PhoneFriend was someone you could call if you were bored, lonely, or scared. However, what exactly "PhoneFriend" was varied from "a cute, furry green monster you can call and talk to" to "he's a person who lives in the schoolyard that likes children and you can call after school if you're home alone" to "I think he's a green creature, but my mom says he's really a college student." Nevertheless, all of the 31 children knew that PhoneFriend was a number you could call to talk to someone.

There was an interesting difference in terms of age regarding whether or not children had heard of PhoneFriend. A series of t-tests revealed that there was a statistically significant difference between children 7 years and younger,

and children over 7 years old. Specifically, children 7 years and younger were more likely to have never heard of PhoneFriend, while children older than 7 were more likely to have heard of PhoneFriend ($t=4.44$, $t<.005$). If we take a look at Table 5, Item Frequencies by Age, we see that it is generally the younger children who report never having heard of PhoneFriend. There are several issues that it would be useful for PhoneFriend to consider here. First, do five and six year olds really need this service? It may be that most five and six year olds are not left at home alone after school; our data would support this. And, second, if so, does PhoneFriend need to target advertisement more intensely toward this age group?

We asked the children who knew about PhoneFriend (n=31) where they had heard about PhoneFriend. Twenty-eight (90.3%) of the children said that they had heard about PhoneFriend at school. Two children had heard about PhoneFriend from a friend (6.5%) and one had heard about PhoneFriend at the Arts Festival (3.2%). Clearly, this suggests that the school is the most efficient and useful place for information about PhoneFriend to be disseminated, and it seems that PhoneFriend is doing a good job of getting this information across to the children. Again, if PhoneFriend decides to target the younger children more intensely, it might be useful to consider working through the kindergarten more intensely. It is also possible that five and six year olds, even if presented with the

information simply do not process it until they've heard it several times and are a little bit older.

Use of PhoneFriend. We asked the 31 children who had heard of PhoneFriend whether or not they had ever called PhoneFriend. Four (12.9%) of the 31 children said they had called PhoneFriend; 27 (87.1%) said they had not. There was a marginal trend in the data suggesting that children who report calling PhoneFriend (average age = 11.5 years) are somewhat older than those who report not calling (average age = 9.7 years); this difference is not statistically significant. Interestingly, however, as we will discuss later regarding satisfaction with PhoneFriend, we received many comments from the older children that, "PhoneFriend is a really great service for younger children" or "I would probably call PhoneFriend if I were younger." Also, of the four children who had called PhoneFriend, 3 reported using the service less than once a month. These 3 children reported having called PhoneFriend only once, however their answer was recorded as "less than once a month" since that was our lowest category. We did not determine how far in the past this call had occurred; thus, it is entirely possible that these children had called when they were, in fact, younger. Only one of the four reported using PhoneFriend more than once and on a somewhat regular basis; this child reported using PhoneFriend once a month.

We asked the four children why they had called PhoneFriend. We received two answers: 1) their parent was

not at home and they didn't know what to do (n=3, 75%) or that 2) they were scared (n=2, 50%). All four children reported that calling PhoneFriend had seemed to help them; 3 said PhoneFriend helped a lot, and 1 said PhoneFriend helped some. As one child said, "PhoneFriend was nice; they talked to me and made me feel better."

We asked the children (n=27) who had not called PhoneFriend why, in general, they thought <u>other</u> children might call PhoneFriend. There were several interesting answers. The most frequently reported reason was that children called when they were scared or afraid (n=12, 44.4%). Eleven children (40.7%) reported that they thought children call PhoneFriend when they're bored or lonely. Ten children (37.0%) reported that children call because they have a problem or emergency to deal with. Additionally, some children reported that PhoneFriend is "someone to talk to" (n=9, 33.3%), especially when there is no one else at home (n=8, 29.6%). Four children indicated that they thought children would call if someone followed them home or broke into their house (n=4, 14.8%). One child (3.7%) reported that he thought someone might call if "they were being bullied by other kids." An interesting impression occured to us while we were doing the interviews. When we asked these children why <u>other</u> children might call PhoneFriend, most of the children answered fairly quickly and assertively. We got the impression that perhaps some of these children had called PhoneFriend in the past and had

chosen to report not having called in order to "save face." Alternatively, these answers certainly indicate that, even if children do not call PhoneFriend, they know what PhoneFriend is all about and what it's there for.

We wanted to get an idea of the children's and parents' perceptions of use of the service. We have reported the parents' perceptions in the section on the results of the parents' survey. We asked the four children who had called PhoneFriend if their parents knew that they had called. Three (75%) of the four children said that their parents knew and felt either "kind of good" (n=1) or "very good" (n=2) about the call. The one child who said that his parents didn't know about the call reported that, if his parents would know about the call, they wouldn't feel any way in particular about it.

We inquired about rules families might have regarding use of PhoneFriend. While there was no statistical significance between boys and girls due to the small number of children who called PhoneFriend (n=4), it is interesting to look at Table 5, Item Frequencies by Sex, and to note that only boys report having any rules for when it is not okay to call. The rules listed for why it is okay to call are that it's okay to call for an emergency, and it's okay to call if you tell your parents when you call. The rules boys reported for when it's not okay to call included when it's not important or when you really don't have to, if your parents are home, or when you're lonely.

Children's Peace of Mind. Given that one of the main attractions and utilties of PhoneFriend is its existence, let alone its use, we assessed the extent to which just having PhoneFriend around makes children feel better, worse, or no differently, when they're at home alone without adults. Of the 31 children that we asked this question, 19 (61.3%) reported that having PhoneFriend to call made them feel better, 12 (38.7%) said they felt no differently, and none of the children said it made them feel worse. When asked why PhoneFriend made them feel better, children (n=19) reported that "it's someone to talk to" (n=9, 47.4%) and that PhoneFriend makes them feel secure (n=9, 47.4%). Five children (23.5%) said it just makes them feel better. Two children reported it would be good to call if you needed help, for example, with homework (10.2%). And one child (5.1%) reported that "PhoneFriend makes me feel better because if I was alone, and I was bored I could call PhoneFriend."

An interesting age difference emerged with respect to how children feel about PhoneFriend's existence. A one-way Analysis of Variance indicated that there is a significant difference between children who feel better and children who feel no differently ($F=6.06$, $p<.02$). Basically, younger children (average age=9.26 years) tend to feel better from having PhoneFriend to call, while older children (average age=11 years) tend to feel no differently. These data seem to suggest that the availability of PhoneFriend is most

useful for children right around middle childhood (7-9 years of age). This is especially emphasized if we recall data presented earlier that the average age of children who report having heard of PhoneFriend is right around 9 years old. Thus, perhaps this age group might be considered a "target" group for PhoneFriend as it's an age where children old enough to be left at home, yet young enough that it's not a comfortable experience. If this is the case, the data also suggest that PhoneFriend is doing a good job of helping children deal with this experience.

Satisfaction with PhoneFriend. We asked the children who had heard of PhoneFriend (n=31) whether there was anything about PhoneFriend that they really didn't like; all thirty children said no. In response to being asked whether there was anything about PhoneFriend that they really did like, 14 children (45.2%) said "no" and 17 (54.8%) responded "yes." It's important to note that a "no" answer to this question does not indicate dissatisfaction with PhoneFriend, but rather that there was nothing special, or outstanding about PhoneFriend that these 14 children wanted to report. Asked what they like about PhoneFriend, 10 children (58.8%) said they liked that "it was there", or PhoneFriend's availability. Seven children (41.6%) said that they liked that PhoneFriend makes you feel better. Three children (17.6%) said that they really liked that PhoneFriend will help you. And, the little girl (n=1, 6.7%) who said that PhoneFriend was a "furry, green creature" said what she

liked best about PhoneFriend was that "he's cute!" These data, then, suggest that both children who use PhoneFriend, and children who are "simply" aware of PhoneFriend, seem to be satisfied with PhoneFriend.

Limitations. Although the results from this survey are encouraging, we must offer a couple of caveats with regard to the data and interpretations this research offers. First, although we mailed out the survey to 700 university employees, only 80 were returned. Without the information regarding employee characteristics, we are unable to ascertain whether this is a good or representative response rate. Further, we did not ask "inelegible" subjects to return the questionnaire, again precluding our ability to determine response rate. In addition to being a potentially small response rate, the sample, in and of itself, is small (80 parents, 37 children). Also, the actual instruments, i.e., the survey and telephone interview, have not been tested and scrutinized with respect to reliability and validity issues, although, for the purposes of this survey, seemed to collect the information we were looking for.

Perhaps the most potentially serious limitation to this study is due to the source of our sample. Due to lack of resources, we employed a sample of convenience: the university faculty and staff. While the argument can be made that the university is the biggest employer in the State College area, we can not assume that this means that the families of the Penn State faculty and staff are representative of all State College, and Bellefonte, families. Thus, an important goal for any future evaluation of PhoneFriend should be to expand the subject population to include non-university families.

Implications for PhoneFriend

Implications for PhoneFriend have been discussed throughout our report. To reiterate, it appears as though the school is PhoneFriend's most effective means through which to disseminate information about the phoneline to parents and children alike. Some comments regarding a lack of knowledge about the service in younger children (ages five and six) have been presented. One suggestion involved placing more emphasis on informing kindergarten classrooms should PhoneFriend choose to address this issue. Similarly, PhoneFriend might wish to highlight information regarding the service's availability on in-service days as some parents (although perhaps not their children) were not aware of PhoneFriend's schedule of operation.

Evaluation Summary

Granted, our evaluation has notable limitations. Nonetheless, our data provide valuable information regarding parents' and children's perceptions of PhoneFriend services. To begin, we assessed the awareness of parents and children in the community of this service. Additionally, we explored the extent to which PhoneFriend provides information and support to children at home alone after school and the extent to which PhoneFriend provides a viable after school service to parents in the community.

Let us begin by emphasizing the tremendous community support that exists for this after school service. Our data suggest that PhoneFriend has been successful in providing a valuable and greatly appreciated service to parents and children

in the University community. The overwhelming majority of parents and children involved in our evaluation survey were familiar with PhoneFriend and in general were more than pleased with the service. The very existence of an after school phone-line for school aged children appears to be one of its strongest contributions to the community. PhoneFriend has recognized and acted upon an important community need in an effective, efficient manner that has its target audience completely satisfied.

Table 1: Frequency of Child's Age

N	Age	Percent of Sample (n=37)
2	5 years	5.4%
2	6 years	5.4%
3	7 years	8.1%
7	8 years	18.9%
6	9 years	16.2%
5	10 years	13.5%
1	11 years	2.7%
7	12 years	18.9%
4	13 years	10.8%

Table 2: Frequency of Child's Age by Sex

Boys (n=19)			Girls (n=18)		
Number	Age	Percent	Number	Age	Percent
1	5	5.3%	1	5	5.6%
1	6	5.3%	1	6	5.6%
0	7	0.0%	3	7	16.7%
4	8	21.1%	3	8	16.7%
3	9	15.8%	3	9	16.7%
4	10	21.1%	1	10	5.6%
1	11	5.3%	0	11	0.0%
3	12	15.8%	4	12	22.2%
2	13	10.5%	2	13	11.1%

Table 3: Item Frequencies

1. Have you ever heard of PhoneFriend?
   n=37, 6=no 16.2%
   31=yes 83.8%

2. Could you tell me what PhoneFriend is? (C provides description of PhoneFriend)
   n=31, 0=wrong 0.0%
   31=correct 100%

3. How did you hear about PhoneFriend?
   n=31, 28=at school 90.3%
   2=friend 6.5%
   1=other 3.2%

4. Have you ever called PhoneFriend?
   n=31, 27=no 87.1% [skip to #16]
   4=yes 12.9%

5. How often do you use PhoneFriend?
   n=4, 1=once a month 25%
   3=less than once a month 75%

6. What were some of your reasons for calling?
   n=4, 3= parent not at home; didn't know what to do 75%
   2= scared 50%

7. Did PhoneFriend seem to help you?
   n=4, 0=no [skip to #9]
   4=yes 100%

8. How much did calling PhoneFriend seem to help you?
   n=4, 3=a lot 75%
   1=some 25%

9. Do your parents know you called PhoneFriend?
   n=4, 1=no 25% [skip to #11]
   3=yes 75%

10. How do your parents feel about your calling PhoneFriend?
    n=3, 2=very good 66.7%
    1=kind of good 33.3%
    [skip to #12]

11. How do you think your parents might feel if they knew you called PhoneFriend?
    n=1, 1=they wouldn't feel either good or bad

12. Do you and your parents have special rules for when its ok to call PhoneFriend?

n=4, 2=no 50% [skip to #14]
2=yes 50%

13. Can you tell me what some of those rules might be?
n=2, 1= tell parents when you'll call 50%
1= emergency 50%

14. Do you and your parents have special rules for when its not ok to call PhoneFriend?
n=4, 2=no 50%
2=yes 50%

15. Can you tell me what some of those rules might be?
n=2, 2= when it's not important; when you don't have to 100%
1= when you're lonely 50%
1= if parents are home 50%

16. Can you tell me some reasons why you think other kids might call PhoneFriend?
n=27, 4= if someone follows you home or breaks in 14.8%
12= afraid 44.4%
9= someone to talk to 33.3%
8= no one else at home 29.6%
10= problem or emergency 37.0%
11= bored or lonely 40.7%
1= bullied by kids 3.7%

17. When you're at home without any grownups, does having PhoneFriend to call make you feel better, worse, or no differently?
n=31, 19=better 61.3%
12=no differently 38.7%

17a. Why does having PhoneFriend to call make you feel better?
n=19, 9=someone to talk to 47.4%
9=more secure 47.4%
1=alone, bored 5.1%
2=if you need help (e.g., homework) 10.2%
5=just feel better 23.5%

18. Is there anything about PhoneFriend that you really don't like?
n=31, 0=yes 0.0%
31=no 100%

19. What don't you like about PhoneFriend?
n=0

20. Is there anything about PhoneFriend that you really do like?
n=31, 14=no 45.2%

17=yes 54.8%

21. What do you really like about PhoneFriend?
n=17, 7=it makes you feel better 41.6%
10=availability 58.8%
3=help 17.6%
1=he's cute 6.7%

Table 4: Item Frequencies By Age

Age	5 n=2	6 n=2	7 n=3	8 n=7	9 n=6	10 n=5	11 n=1	12 n=7	13 n=4
Item									
1. Have you ever heard of PhoneFriend?	0=yes 2=no	1=yes 1=no	2=yes 1=no	6=yes 1=no	6=yes 0=no	5=yes 0=no	1=yes 0=no	6=yes 1=no	4=yes 0=no
2. Could you tell me what PhoneFriend is? (Child provides description of PhoneFriend.)	0=wrong 0=right	0=wrong 1=right	0=wrong 2=right	0=wrong 6=right	0=wrong 6=right	0=wrong 5=right	0=wrong 1=right	0=wrong 6=right	0=wrong 4=right
3. How did you hear about PhoneFriend?		1=school	1=school 1=other	6=school	5=school 1=friend	5=school	1=school	6=school	3=school 1=friend
4. Have you ever called PhoneFriend?		0=yes 1=no	0=yes 2=no	0=yes 6=no	0=yes 6=no	2=yes 3=no	0=yes 1=no	0=yes 6=no	2=yes 2=no
5. How often do you use PhoneFriend?						1=once a month 1=less than once a month			2=less than once a month
6. What were some of your reasons for calling?						2=P not home 1=scared			1=P not home 1=scared

Age	5 n=2	6 n=2	7 n=3	8 n=7	9 n=6	10 n=5	11 n=1	12 n=7	13 n=4
7. Did PhoneFriend seem to help you?						2=yes 0=no			2=yes 0=no
8. How much did calling PhoneFriend seem to help you?						2=a lot			1=a lot 1=some
9. Do your parents know you called PhoneFriend?						1=no 1=yes			0=no 2=yes
10. How do your parents feel about your calling PhoneFriend?						1=very good			1=very good 1=kind of good
11. How do you think your parents might feel if they knew you called PhoneFriend?						1=they wouldn't feel either way			
12. Do you and your parents have special rules for when it's ok to call PhoneFriend?						1=no 1=yes			1=no 1=yes
13. Can you tell me what some of those rules might be?						1=tell parents			1=emergency
14. Do you and your parents have special rules for when its <u>not</u> ok to call PhoneFriend?						0=no			2=no

Age	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
	n=2	n=2	n=3	n=7	n=6	n=5	n=1	n=7	n=4
						2=yes			0=yes

15. Can you tell me what some of those rules might be?

2=when its not impt.
1=lonely
1=if parents are home

16. Can you tell me some reasons why you think other kids might call PhoneFriend?

1=bored, lonely

2=someone follows you home
3=afraid
1=talk to someone
4=no one home
2=problem

2=afraid
1=talk to someone
1=no one home
4=bored, lonely

1=someone follows you home
4=afraid
1=talk to someone
3=problem
1=bored, lonely

1=problem
1=bored, lonely

2=afraid
4=talk to someone
1=no one home
3=bored, lonely
1=bullied by others

1=someone follows you
1=afraid
2=talk to someone
1=no one home
1=problem
1=bored, lonely

17. When you're home without any grownups, does having PhoneFriend to call make you feel better, worse, or no differently?

1=better 2=better 4=better 4=better 4=better 1=better 2=better 1=better
2=no dif. 2=no dif. 1=no dif. 4=no dif. 1=no dif

Age	5 n=2	6 n=2	7 n=3	8 n=7	9 n=6	10 n=5	11 n=1	12 n=7	13 n=4
17a. How does having PhoneFriend to call make you feel better?			2=someone to talk	2=someone to talk 2=more secure 1=feel better	2=someone to talk 3=more secure 1=help	1=someone to talk 2=more secure 2=feel better	1=alone, bored 1=help	2=someone to talk 1=more secure 1=feel better	1=more secure
18. Is there anything about PhoneFriend that you really don't like?		1=no 0=yes	2=no 0=yes	6=no 0=yes	6=no 0=yes	5=no 0=yes	1=no 0=yes	6=no 0=yes	4=no 0=yes
19. What don't you like about PhoneFriend?	n=0	n=0	n=0	n=0	n=0	n=0	n=0	n=0	n=0
20. Is there anything about PhoneFriend that you really do like?		1=no 0=yes	0=no 2=yes	2=no 4=yes	5=no 1=yes	2=no 3=yes	0=no 1=yes	2=no 4=yes	2=no 2=yes
21. What do you really like about PhoneFriend?		1=make you feel better 1=avail.	3=avail. 1=he's cute	1=make you feel better 1=avail.		3=make you feel better 1=help	1=avail.	2=avail. 2=help	2=avail.

Table 5: Item Frequencies By Sex

Item	Boys (n=19)	Girls (n=18)
#1 Have you ever heard of PhoneFriend?		
	4=no	2=no
	15=yes	16=yes
#2 Could you tell me what PhoneFriend is? (Child provides a description of PhoneFriend).		
	0=wrong	0=wrong
	15=correct	16=correct
#3 How did you hear about PhoneFriend?		
	14=school	14=school
	1=friend	1=friend
		1=other
#4 Have you ever called PhoneFriend?		
	12=no	15=no
	3=yes	1=yes
#5 How often do you use PhoneFriend?		
	1=once a month	1=less than once a month
	2=less than once a month	
#6 What were some of your reasons for calling?		
	3= parent not at home; didn't know what to do	
	1= scared	1=scared
#7 Did PhoneFriend seem to help you?		
	0=no	0=no
	3=yes	1=yes
#8 How much did PhoneFriend seem to help you?		
	2=a lot	1=a lot
	1=some	
#9 Do your parents know you called PhoneFriend?		
	1=no	0=no
	2=yes	1=yes
#10 How do your parents feel about your calling PhoneFriend?		
	1=very good	1=very good
	1=kind of good	
#11 How do you think your parents might feel if they knew you called PhoneFriend?		
	1=very good	
#12 Do you and your parents have special rules for when		

it's ok to call PhoneFriend?

2=no	0=no
1=yes	1=yes

#13 Can you tell me what some of those rules might be?

1=tell parents when you'll call

#14 Do you and your parents have special rules for when its <u>not</u> ok to call PhoneFriend?

1=no	1=no
2=yes	0=yes

#15 Can you tell me what some of those rules might be?

2=when it's not important; when you don't have to
1=when you're lonely
3=if parents are home

#16 Can you tell me some reasons why you think other kids might call PhoneFriend?

3=someone follows you home or breaks in	1=someone follows you home or breaks in
8=afraid	4=afraid
3=someone to talk to	6=someone to talk to
3=no one at home	5=no one at home
7=problem or emergency	3=problem or emergency
5=bored, lonely	6=bored, lonely
1=bullied by kids	

#17 When you're at home without any grownups, does having PhoneFriend to call make you feel better, worse, or no differently?

7=better	12=better
8=no differently	4=no differently

#17a How does having PhoneFriend to call make you feel better?

2=someone to talk to	7=someone to talk to
4=more secure	5=more secure
	1=alone, bored
1=help (e.g, homework)	1=help
2=just feel better	3=just feel better

#18 Is there anything about PhoneFriend that you really don't like?

14=no	16=no
1=yes	0=yes

#19 What don't you like about PhoneFriend?

n=0	n=0

#20 Is there anything about PhoneFriend that you really do like?

8=no	6=no
7=yes	10=yes

#21 What do you really like about PhoneFriend?

3=make you feel better	2=make you feel better
5=availability	6=availability
1=help	2=help
	1=he's cute

Table 6: Item Frequencies for Parents' Responses

1. Sex of Respondent:
   n=72, 39=male (54%)
   33=female (46%)

2. N/A

3. Are there any children older than 13 living in your home?
   n=80, 19=yes (24%)
   61=no (76%)

4. Which of the following best describes your situation?
   n=80, 10=single parent household, parent working outside the home full or part-time (13%)
   50=two parent household, both parents working outside the home full or part-time (62%)
   20=two parent household, one parent at home (25%)

5. Where does your elementary school age child go after school?
   n=80, 65=home (81%)
   15=other (e.g., daycare, neighbor) (19%)

6. Does someone stay with your child after school?
   n=66, 51=yes (77%)
   15=no (23%)

7. Who stays with your child after school?
   n=51, 31=parent (61%)
   6=older sibling (12%)
   4=babysitter (8%)
   2=grandparent (4%)
   1=other (2%)
   6=more than one person (13%)

8. On average, how many days a week does your child arrive home from school before an adult gets there?
   n=24, 3=1 day 2=4 days
   6=2 days 13=5 days

9. On the average, how many <u>hours</u> is your child home before an adult gets there?
   n=24, 14=1 hr. 2=3 hrs.
   7=2 hrs. 1=4 hrs.

10. Have you ever heard of the PhoneFriend service, a telephone help-line for children in our community?
    n=80, 69=yes (86%)
    11=no (14%)

11. How did you hear about PhoneFriend?

n=69,		
	0=television	
	4=radio	(6%)
	21=school personnel	(30%)
	6=newspaper	(9%)
	9=children	(13%)
	3=friend	(4%)
	2=co-worker	(3%)
	2=other	(3%)
	22=more than one source	(32%)

12. Is the PhoneFriend sticker by your phone?

n=68,		
	37=yes	(54%)
	31=no	(46%)

13. Have you talked to your child about PhoneFriend?

n=68,		
	47=yes	(69%)
	21=no	(31%)

14. To your knowledge, has your child ever called PhoneFriend?

n=68,		
	6=yes	(9%)
	62=no	(91%)

15. How often, on the average, do you think your child uses PhoneFriend?

n=4,		
	4=less than once a month	(100%)

16. What are some of your child's reasons for calling?

n=6,		
	4=check it out	(67%)
	1=boredom	(17%)
	1=uneasy, upset	(17%)

17. How much did calling PhoneFriend seem to help your child?

n=2,	
	1=a lot
	1=a little

18. What are your feelings about your child calling PhoneFriend?

n=6,		
	2=neutral	(33%)
	4=very positive	(67%)

19. How would you feel about your child using this service?

n=61,		
	5=somewhat negative	(8%)
	21=neutral	(34%)
	17=somewhat positive	(28%)
	18=very positive	(30%)

20. Are there special conditions under which you might encourage your child to use PhoneFriend?

n=68,		
	51=yes	(75%)
	17=no	(25%)

21. What are some of those conditions?

n=46, 25=when the child needs it or is alone and afraid
22=child has a problem or is in a dangerous situation
21=the child needs something and cannot reach parents

22. Are there special conditions under which you might restrict your child's use of PhoneFriend?

n=68, 23=yes (34%)
45=no (66%)

23. What are some of those conditions?

n=21, 17=if the child calls for no real reason (e.g., abusing the service)
5=if the child could have reached parents

24. What are some reasons why you think kids in general might call PhoneFriend?

n=65, 38=a friendly person to talk with when parents are not available
19=to check it out or ask questions
42=the child is lonely or bored
37=the child is afraid
5=for amusement (abusing the service)

25. Has the availability of an after-school help-line for children changed how you feel about where your child goes after school?

n=67, 1=yes (1%)
66=no (99%)

26. How has the availability of the help-line influenced your decisions about after-school care?

n=0

27. What, if any, effect would you say the availability of an after-school help-line has had on your child's attitude about his/her after school situation?

n=63, 8=seems to feel better (13%)
55=seems to feel no differently (87%)

28. Has the number of times your child calls you at work during after school hours changed with the availability of PhoneFriend?

n=61, 2=yes (3%)
59=no (97%)

29. Has the number of times he/she calls you at work increased or decreased?

n=1, 1=increased

30. Is there anything about PhoneFriend that you find dissatisfactory?

n=63, 3=yes (5%)
60=no (95%)

31. What is it about PhoneFriend that you are dissatisfied with?

n=2, 1=offers children false security
1=not available on inservice days

32. Is there anything about this service that you are particularly pleased with?

n=61, 31=yes (51%)
30=no (49%)

33. What is it about PhoneFriend that you are especially pleased about?

n=30, 27=it's availability to children
6=someone cares about these children!

NOTE: Thirty three of the 80 parents (41%) consented to our calling their children.

Dear Parent,

We are from the College of Human Development at Penn State, and we are conducting a survey addressing the after-school needs of grade-school children in our community. Your name has been randomly selected from the faculty/staff directory because we do not know in advance which university employees have school aged children. If you have any children living in your home between the ages of 5 and 13, we would appreciate your taking a few minutes to complete the enclosed questionnaire. If there are no grade-school children living in your home, please disregard our request and discard this survey.

Some of you may have already been called by the State College Area School District, which is conducting a similar study. The information we are requesting, however, is an important supplement to the information collected by the School District. We apologize in advance for any inconvenience this may cause you. By taking part in this survey, your family will contribute important information that can be used by professionals in this community to help serve the after-school needs of parents and children.

In addition to parents' responses to our questionnaire, we are also interested in hearing what grade-school children themselves have to say. If you would consent to our calling and asking your child a series of questions similar to the ones we've asked you, please indicate so in the space provided on the last page of your questionnaire. This telephone survey will take no more than five minutes. We have also asked you to indicate a convenient time for us to call. Should you decide against allowing your child to participate, the information you provide on the enclosed questionnaire will, in itself, be a valuable contribution to our study.

Your participation in this project is, of course, voluntary and your responses strictly confidential. Please note that neither your responses nor the responses of your children will be linked with your names, or any other identifying information, in any way as the list of those University employees selected for inclusion has already been destroyed.

We hope to hear from you. Please do not hesitate to call us if you have any questions or concerns regarding this study. Thank you for your cooperation.

Sincerely,

Lise Youngblade, M.S.
Graduate Student
Department of
Individual and
Family Studies
863-0267

Vicki Harris
Graduate Student
Department of
Individual and
Family Studies
865-1751

Stephen Mastrofski, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor of
Community Systems
Planning and Development
863-0280

APPENDIX A:

INTRODUCTORY LETTER AND

PARENTS' SURVEY

1. **Sex:** M F

2. **Please indicate the age and sex of any children living in your home between the ages of five and 13?**

   Age _____ _____ _____ _____ _____
   Sex _____ _____ _____ _____ _____

3. **Are there any children older than 13 living in your home?**

   YES _____ **Age** _____ _____ _____ _____ _____
   Sex _____ _____ _____ _____ _____

   NO _____

4. **Which of the following best describes your situation?**

   _____ **Single parent household, parent working outside the home full or part-time.**

   _____ **Two-parent household, both parents working outside the home full or part-time.**

   _____ **Two-parent household, one parent at home.**

5. **Where does your elementary school age child go after school?**

   Home _____
   Daycare _____
   Neighbor _____
   (skip to #10) **After-school programming (e.g., intramurals, boy-scouts, etc.)** _____
   Other _____

6. **Does someone stay with your child after school?**

   YES _____

   NO _____ (skip to #8)

7. **Who stays with your child after school?**

   Parent _____
   Older Sibling _____
   Babysitter _____
   Grandparent _____
   Other _____

   (skip to #10)

8. On the average, how many days a week does your child arrive home from school before an adult gets there?

_____

9. On the average, how many <u>hours</u> is your child home before an adult gets there? _____

10. Have you ever heard of the PhoneFriend service, a telephone help-line for children in our community?

NO _____ (Please go to last page. Thanks!)

YES _____

11. How did you hear about PhoneFriend?

television _____
radio _____
school personnel _____
newspaper _____
children _____
friend _____
co-worker _____
other _____

12. Is the PhoneFriend sticker by your phone?

YES _____

NO _____

13. Have you talked to your child about PhoneFriend?

NO _____

YES _____

14. To your knowledge, has your child ever called PhoneFriend?

NO _____ (skip to #19)

YES _____

15. How often, on the average, do you think your child uses PhoneFriend?

Once a day _____
Once a week _____
Once a month _____
Less than once a month _____

16. What are some of your child's reasons for calling?

_____

_____

_____

17. How much did calling PhoneFriend seem to help your child?

a lot _____
some _____
a little _____
hardly at all _____
it seemed to make things worse _____

18. What are your feelings about your child calling Phone Friend?

very negative _____
somewhat negative _____
neutral _____
somewhat positive _____
very positive _____

(skip to #20)

19. How would you feel about your child using this service?

very negative _____
somewhat negative _____
neutral _____
somewhat positive _____
very positive _____

20. Are there special conditions under which you might encourage your child to use PhoneFriend?

NO _____ (skip to #22)

YES _____

21. What are some of those conditions?

_____

_____

22. Are there special conditions under which you might restrict your child's use of PhoneFriend?

YES _____

NO _____ (skip to #24)

23. What are some of those conditions?

_____

_____

24. What are some reasons why you think kids in general might call PhoneFriend?

_____

_____

_____

25. Has the availability of an after-school help-line for children changed how you feel about where your child goes after school?

NO _____ (skip to #27)

YES _____

26. How has the availability of the help-line influenced your decisions about after-school care?

_____

_____

_____

27. What, if any, effect would you say the availability of an after-school help-line has had on your child's attitude about his/her after-school situation? Please explain your answer.

_____ seems to feel better _____

_____

_____ seems to feel worse _____

_____

_____ seems to feel no differently

28. Has the number of times your child calls you at work during after school hours changed with the availability of PhoneFriend?

YES _____

NO _____ (skip to # 30)

29. Has the number of times he/she calls you at work

Increased _____

Decreased _____

30. Is there anything about PhoneFriend that you find dissatisfactory?

NO _____ (skip to #32)

YES _____

31. What is it about PhoneFriend that you are dissatisfied with?

_____

_____

32. Is there anything about this service that you are particularly pleased with?

NO _____ (please go to last page)

YES _____

33. What is it about PhoneFriend that you are especially pleased about?

_____

_____

APPENDIX B:

CHILDREN'S TELEPHONE SURVEY

Thank you so much for your time.

Please return your completed questionnaire to Vicki Harris or Lise Youngblade in the enclosed inter office envelope.

Remember: If you consent to our calling your child at home, please indicate so in the space provided below.

CHILD'S FIRST NAME _____

HOME PHONE NUMBER _____

A CONVENIENT TIME TO CALL _____

ALSO: If there is more than one child living in your home between the ages of 5 and 13, and you would consent to our calling and asking them some questions about their experiences with PhoneFriend as well, please provide their first names below.

CHILDRENS' FIRST NAMES _____ _____ _____

CONVENIENT TIMES TO CALL _____ _____ _____

TELEPHONE SURVEY FOR CHILDREN

INTRODUCTION: Hello, I'm _____ from Penn State. We're talking to lots of kids in your town about the kinds of stuff they do after school. I've already talked to your parents and they said it would be ok if I called and asked you a few questions. How does that sound? All the things you tell me will be kept just between us. Great! Lets get started. First,

1. Have you ever heard of PhoneFriend?

   NO _____ (Read: Thanks alot for talking with me! You've been very helpful. Can I talk to your mom/dad now please.)

   YES _____

2. Could you tell me what PhoneFriend is?

   _____

   _____

3. How did you hear about PhoneFriend?

   television _____
   radio _____
   at school _____
   newspaper _____
   parent _____
   friend _____
   other _____

4. Have you ever called PhoneFriend?

   NO _____ (skip to #16)

   YES _____

5. How often do use PhoneFriend?

   Once a day _____
   Once a week _____
   Once a month _____
   Less than once a month _____

6. What were some of your reasons for calling?

   _____

   _____

7. Did PhoneFriend seem to help you?

NO _____ (skip to #9)

YES _____

8. How much did calling PhoneFriend seem to help you?

a lot _____
some _____
a little _____
hardly at all _____

9. Do your parents know you called PhoneFriend?

NO _____ (skip to #11)

YES _____

10. How do your parents feel about your calling PhoneFriend?

Very good _____
Kind of good _____
They don't feel either way _____
Kind of bad _____
Very bad _____
(skip to #12)

11. How do you think your parents might feel if they knew you called PhoneFriend?

Very good _____
Kind of good _____
They wouldn't feel either way _____
Kind of bad _____
Very bad _____

12. Do you and your parents have special rules for when its ok to call PhoneFriend?

NO _____ (skip to #14)

YES _____

13. Can you tell me what some of those rules might be?

_____

_____

14. Do you and your parents have special rules for when its <u>not</u> ok to call PhoneFriend?

NO _____ (skip to #16)

YES _____

15. Can you tell me what some of those rules might be?

_____

_____

16. Can you tell me some reasons why you think other kids might call PhoneFriend?

_____

_____

_____

17. When your at home without any grownups, does having PhoneFriend to call make you feel better, worse, or no dif ferently?

_____ Better _____

_____

_____ Worse _____

_____

_____ No Differently

18. Is there anything about PhoneFriend that you really don't like?

NO _____ (skip to #20)

YES _____

19. What don't you like about PhoneFriend?

_____

_____

20. Is there anything about PhoneFriend that you really like?

NO _____ (skip to concluding comments)

YES _____

21. What do you really like about PhoneFriend?

_____

_____

*** CONCLUDING COMMENTS: You were really a big help to me. Thanks a lot for taking the time to answer my questions!